A GRAINE OF MVSTERD-SEEDE:

OR,

THE LEAST MEASVRE OF GRACE, that is or can be effectuall to ſaluation.

not in S.T.C.

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ALMA
MATER
CANTA
BRIGIA

To the Right Honorable and Vertuous Lady, the Lady Magaret, Counteſſe of Cumberland, Grace and Peace.

Right Honourable, the kingdome of heauen, of which the ſcripture ſpeaketh ſo oft, is properly a certen ſtate or condition, wherby we ſtand in the fauor and loue of God, in and by Chriſt. And this kingdome is cõpared to a graine of Muſterd-ſeede, to teach vs that a man is euen at that inſtãt already entred into the kingdome of heauen, when the Lord that good husbandman hath caſt but ſome little portion of faith or repentance into the ground of the heart; yea, though it bee but

as the Graine of Musterd-seed. Of this little Graine I haue penned this Treatise, in quantity answerable thereto: and I now present the same to your Ladyship, not to supply your want, (for I hope you are stored with many Graines of this kinde) but to performe some duty on my part. Hoping therefore that your Ladyship will reade and accept the same, I take my leaue, commending you to the blessing and protection of Almightie.

Your Honours

to command,

W. Perkins.

A GRAINE OF MVSTERD-SEED OR, THE LEAST measure of grace, that is, or can be effectuall to ſaluation.

IT is a very neceſſary point to be knowne, *What is the leaſt meaſure of grace that can befall the true child of God, leſſer then which, there is no grace effectuall to ſaluation.* For firſt of all, the right vnderſtanding of this point, is the very foundation of a true cõfort vnto all troubled and touched conſciences. Secondly, it is a notable meanes to

ſtirre vp thankefulneſſe in them that haue any grace at all; when they ſhall in examination of themſelues conſider, that they haue receiued of God the leaſt meaſure of grace or more. Thirdly, it will be an inducement, and a ſpurre vnto many careleſſe and vnrepentant perſons, to embrace the Goſpell, and to beginne repentance for their ſinnes; when they ſhall perceiue, and that by the word of God, that God accepts the very ſeeds and rudiments of faith and repentance at the firſt, though they bee but in meaſure as a Graine of Muſterd-ſeede. Now then for opening and clearing of this point: I will ſet downe fiue ſeuerall concluſions, in

ſuch

such order as one shall confirme and explane the other, and one depend vpon the other.

I. Conclusion.

A man that doth but beginne to bee conuerted, is euen at that instant, the very child of God, though inwardly hee be more carnall then spirituall.

The Exposition.

IN a man there must be considered three things, the substance of the body and soule, whereof man is said to consist; the faculties placed in the soule and exercised in the body, as vnderstanding, will, affections: the in-

tegrity and puritie of the faculties, whereby they are conformable to the will of God, and beare his Image. And since the fall of *Adam*, man is not deprived of his substance or of the powers and faculties of his soule, but onely of the third, which is the puritie, or integritie of nature. And therefore the conuersion of a sinner, whereof the conclusion speaketh, is not the change of the substance of man, or of the faculties of the soule: but a renewing and restoring of that puritie and holinesse which was lost by mans fall, with the abolishment of that naturall corruption that is in all the powers of the soule. This is the worke of God, and of God

alone, and that on this manner. First of all, when it pleaseth God to worke a change in any, hee doth it not first in one part, then afterward in another, as he that repaires a decaied house by peecemeale: but the worke, both for the beginning, continuance, and accomplishment, is in the whole man, and euery part at once, specially in the minde, conscience, will, and affections: as on the contrary, when *Adam* lost the image of God, he lost it in euery part. Secondly, the conuersion of a sinner is not wrought all at one instant, but in continuance of time: and that by certaine measures and degrees. And a man is then in the first degree of his conuersion

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when the holy Ghoſt by the meanes of the word, inſpires him with ſome ſpirituall motions, & begins to regenerate and renew the inward powers of his ſoule. And hee may in this caſe very fitly be compared to the night in the firſt dawning of the day, in which though the darkeneſſe remaine and be more in quantitie then the light, yet the Sunne hath alreadie caſt ſome beames of light into the ayre, whereupon we tearme it the breaking of the day. Now then, the very point which I teach, is, that a man at this inſtant, and in this very ſtate, (God as yet hauing but layd certen beginnings of true cõuerſion in his heart) is the very childe of God, and that not

only

onely in the eternall purpose of God (as all the elect are) but indeede by actual adoption: and this is plaine by a manifest reason: There be foure speciall workes of grace in euery child of God: his vnion with Christ, his adoption, iustification, & conuersion: and these foure are wrought all at one instant, so as for order of time, neither goes before, nor after other: and yet in regard of order of nature, vnion with Christ, Iustification, and adoption, goe before the inward conuersion of a sinner, it beeing the fruite and effect of all. Vpon this it followeth necessarily, that a sinner in the very first act of his conuersion, is iustified, adopted, and incorporated into

into the myſticall body of Chriſt. In the Parable of the prodigall ſonne, the father with ioy receiues his wicked child; but when? ſurely when hee ſaw him comming a farre off, and when as yet hee had made no confeſsion or humiliation to his father, but onely had conceiued with himſelfe a purpoſe to returne and to ſay, Father I haue ſinned againſt heauen and againſt thee, &c. And *Paul* ſaith of many of the Corinthians, that hee could not ſpeake vnto them as ſpirituall men, but as carnall, euen babes in Chriſt, 1. *Cor.* 3. 1. When *Dauid* reprooued by *Nathan* did but begin to repent and to ſay, *I haue ſinned*, preſently *Nathan* the Prophet of the Lord

Lord saide, *The Lord hath taken away thy sin.* Of this thing *Dauid* seemes to speake in the 32. Psal. v. 5. *I said* [that is, I purposed and thought with my selfe] *I will confesse against my selfe mine vnrighteousnesse, and thou forgauest mine iniquities.* Vpon these words *Augustine* saith, *Marke, he doth not confesse, but promiseth to confesse, and God forgiueth him.* Againe, *There be* (saith hee) *three syllables,* peccani, *I haue sinned? and from these three syllables the flame of a sacrifice did ascend into heauen before God.* Chrysostome saith, *Say thou hast sinned: and thou hast loosed thy sinne.* And Ambrose saith: *If he said, I will confesse, and obtained pardon before hee confessed, how much more when*

he

he had confessed, saying, I know mine iniquitie, Was his sin pardoned? Gregory on this Psal. saith, *Marke how speedily pardon comes, and how great is the commendation of Gods mercy, in that pardon comes together with the desire of confession, and remission comes to the heart, before confession breake forth in speech.*

II. Conclusion.

The first materiall beginnings of the conuersion of a sinner, or the smallest measure of renewing grace, haue the promises of this life, and the life to come.

The Exposition.

THe beginnings of conuersion must be distinguished: some are beginnings of

of preparation, some beginnings of composition. Beginnings of preparation are such as bring vnder, tame and subdue the stubbernnes of mans nature: without making any change at all: of this sort are the accusations of the conscience by the ministerie of the law, feares and terrours arising thence, compunction of heart, which is the apprehension of Gods anger against sinne. Now these and the like, I exclude in the conclusion; for though they goe before to prepare a sinner to his conuersion following, yet are they no graces of God, but fruits both of the law, being the ministery of death, as also of an accusing conscience. Beginnings of composition

sition I tearme all those inward motions and inclinations of Gods Spirit, that follow after the worke of the law vpon the conscience, and rise vpon the meditation of the Gospel, that promiseth righteousnesse and life euerlasting by Christ: out of which motions the conuersion of a sinner ariseth, and of which it consisteth: what these are, it shall afterward appeare. Againe, grace must be distinguished: it is two-fold; restraining grace, or renuing grace. Restraining grace, I tearme certaine common gifts of God, seruing onely to order and frame the outward conuersation of men to the Law of God, or seruing to bereaue men of excuse in the day of

indge-

iudgement. By this kinde of grace, heathen men haue bin liberall, iust, sober, valiant, and mercifull. By it men liuing in the Church of God, haue beene inlightened, and hauing tasted of the good word of God, haue reioyced therein, and for a time outwardly conformed themselues thereto. Renewing grace is not common to all men, but proper to the elect, & it is a gift of Gods Spirit, whereby the corruption of a sinner is not only restrained, but also mortified, and the decaied image of God restored in righteousnes and true holines. Now then the conclusion must only bee vnderstood of the second, and not of the first: for though a man haue neuer so

much

much of this restraining grace, yet vnlesse he haue the spirit of Christ to create faith in the heart, and to sanctifie him, he is as farre from saluation as another. Thus then the sense and meaning of the conclusion is, that the verie least measure of saving grace and the verie beginning or seedes of regeneration doe declare, and after a sort giue title to men of all the mercifull promises of God, whether they concerne this life or the life to come: and are therfore approoued of God, if they be in truth; & accepted as greater measures of grace. That which our Saviour Christ saith of the worke of miracles, Math. 17. 20. *If ye haue faith as a graine of Musterd*

sterd-seede, ye shall say vnto this mountaine, remoone hence to yonder place, and it shall remoone, must by the law of equall proportion be applyed to sauing faith, repentance, the feare of God, and all other graces; if they bee truely wrought in the heart, though they be but as small as one little graine of Musterd-seede, they shall be sufficiently effectuall to bring foorth good workes; for which they are ordayned. The Prophet *Esay* 42.3. saith, that Christ *shall not quench the smoaking flaxe, nor breake the bruised reede.* Let the comparison bee marked: fire in flaxe must bee both little and weak in quantity as a sparke or twain, that cannot cause a flame, but only

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ly a ſmoke, ſpecially in a matter ſo eaſie to burne. Here thē is ſignified, that the gifts and graces of Gods ſpirit, that are both for meaſure & ſtrength as a ſparke or twaine of fire, ſhall not bee neglected, but rather accepted and cheriſhed by Chriſt. When our Sauiour Chriſt heard the young man make a confeſsion of a practiſe but of outward and ciuill righteouſneſſe, *he looked vpon him and loued him.* Mar. 10.21. and when he heard the Scribe to ſpeake diſcreetely but one good ſpeech, that to loue God with all the hart is aboue all ſacrifices, he ſaide vnto him, *That he was not far from the kingdome of heauen.* Therefore no doubt, hee will loue with a more ſpeciall

loue, and accept as the good subiects of his kingdome, those that haue receiued a further mercy of God, to bee borne anew of water and the Spirit.

III. Conclusion.

A constant and earnest desire to be reconciled to God, to beleeue, and to repent, if it bee in a touched heart, is in acceptation with God, as reconciliation, faith, repentance it selfe.

The Exposition.

LVst or desire is two-fold, natural, and supernatural. Naturall is that whose beginnings and obiect is in nature, that

that is, which ariſeth of the naturall will of man, and affecteth ſuch things as are thought to bee good according to the light of nature. And this kinde of deſire hath his degrees, yet ſo as they are all limited within the compaſſe of nature. Some deſire riches, honours, pleaſures, ſome learning & knowledge, becauſe it is the light & perfection of the minde: ſome goe further & ſeeke after the vertues of iuſtice, tẽperance, liberality, &c. and thus many heathen men haue excelled. Some againe deſire true happineſſe, as *Balaam* did, who wiſhed to die the death of the righteous: becauſe it is the property of nature to ſeeke the preſeruation of it ſelfe.

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But here nature staies it selfe: for where the minde reueales not, the will affects not. Supernaturall desires, are such as both for their beginning and obiect, are aboue nature. For their beginning is from the holy Ghost; and the obiect or matter about which they are cõuersant, are things diuine and spirituall which concerne the kingdome of heauen: and of this kinde are the desires of which I speake in this place. Againe, that wee may not bee deceiued in our desires, but may the better discerne them from flittering and fleeting motions, I adde three restraints. First of all, the desire of reconciliation, the desire to beleeue, or the desire to repent, &c. must bee con-

constant and haue continuance, otherwise it may iustly be suspected. Secondly, it must be earnest and serious, though not alwaies, yet at sometimes that wee may be able to say, with *Dauid*, My soule desireth after thee O Lord, as the thirsty land: and, As the Hart braieth after the riuers of water, so panteth my soule after thee O God, my soule thirsteth for God, euen the liuing God. Thirdly, it must bee in a touched heart; for when a man is touched in conscience, the heart is cast downe, and (as much as it can) it withdrawes it self from God. For this cause, if then there be any spirituall motions whereby the heart is lift vp vnto God, they are without

out doubt from the Spirit of God. Thus then I auouch, that the desire of reconciliation with God in Christ, is reconciliation it selfe: the desire to beleeue, is faith indeed: & the desire to repent, repentance it selfe. But marke how. A desire to be reconciled, is not reconciliation in nature (for the desire is one thing, and reconciliation is another) but in Gods acceptation: for if we being touched throughly for our sinnes, doe desire to haue them pardoned, and to be at one with God, God accepts vs as reconciled. Againe, desire to beleeue, it is not faith in nature, but onely in Gods acceptation, God accepting the will for the deede. That this doctrine is the will and

word of God, it appeares by these reasons. First of all, God hath annexed a promise of blessednesse, and of life euerlasting, to the desire of grace, Math. 5. *Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousnesse, for they shal be satisfied.* Ioh. 7. 38. *If any man thirst, let him come to mee, and drinke.* Reuel. 21. *I will giue vnto him which is a thirst of the wel of the water of life freely.* Now what is this to thirst? properly it is, when wee are in a drought or drinesse, and want drinke to refresh vs, and desire it. And therefore by all resemblance, they are said to thirst after righteousnesse, that want it, and would faine haue it. And they thirst after Christ, that feele themselues out of Christ,

and

and desire, yea long after the blood of Christ, that they might bee refreshed with it in their consciences. Heere then we see, that the desire of mercy, in the want of mercy, is the obtaining of mercy; and the desire to beleeue in the want of faith, is faith. Marke then: though as yet thou want firme and liuely grace, yet art thou not altogether voide of grace, if thou canst vnfainedly desire it, thy desire is the seede, conception, or bud of that which thou wantest. Now is the spring time of the ingrafted word, or the immortall seed cast into the furrowes of thy heart: waite but a while, vsing the good meanes to this end appointed, and thou shalt see

the leaues, blossomes & fruite will shortly follow after. Secõdly, the desire of any good thing is accepted of God, as the liuely inuocation of his holy name, Psal. 10. *God heareth the desire of the poore.* Psal. 145. *Hee will fulfill the desire of them that feare him.* When *Moses* said nothing, but onely desired in heart the helpe and protection of God at the red sea, the Lord saide vnto him, Why cryest thou vnto me? Exod. 14. 15. And when we know not to pray as wee ought, *Paul* saith, that the spirit maketh request by the inward groanes of the heart, Rom. 8. 26. Hence I gather, that when a man in his weakenesse prayes with sighes and groanes, for the gift of a liue-

ly faith, the want whereof hee findes in himselfe, his very praier on this manner made, is as truly in acceptation with God, as a prayer made in a liuely faith. And heere it is further to be considered, that *Paul* calles these *groanes vnspeakeable*, and why? Of most interpreters they are thought to be vnspeakeable by reason of their greatnesse, and this I will not denie: it seemes neuertheless that they are so tearmed by reason of their weakenesse, for they are commonly small, weake, and confused in the hearts of Gods children; when they are distressed: and the words following seeme to import thus much: for when it had beene said that Gods Spirit in

vs makes requeſt with groans not to be vttered: ſome man might haply reply and ſay, If wee cannot diſcerne and vtter theſe groanes in our ſelues, what are wee the better? *Paul* addes therfore, that although we know not, yet God a ſearcher of all things hidden in the heart, knowes the minde and meaning of the ſpirite. And thus the words yet further affoard a comfortable inſtruction in the children of God, namely, that being in diſtreſſe, whether in life or death, if by grace we can but ſigh, or ſob vnto God, though it be weake and feeble, like the faint pulſe in the time of death; wee, or the Spirit of God in vs, doe indeede make requeſt vnto God that ſhal be heard,

heard, yea, (as the words are) wee doe more then make request: and though we doe not alwaies see what Gods Spirit makes vs to sigh after, yet God doth. To the testimony of Scripture, I adde the testimonies of godly and learned men, not to prooue the doctrine in hand; but to shew a consent, and to prooue thus much, that the thing which I auouch, is no priuate phantasie of any man. *Easily* (saith Ambrose of God) *is he reconciled,* [b] *if hee be instantly intreated.* Augustine saith, *Let thy desire be before him, and thy father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly: for thy desire is thy praier, & if thy desire be continuall, thy prayer is continuall.* Hee addes further in

Lib. 7. in Lu. c. 66.

[b] Si impenseratur.

On Psa 36.

the same place, that *the desire is a continuall voice, and the cry of the heart, and the inward inuocation of God, which may bee made without intermission.* Againe. *To desire the helpe of grace is the beginning of grace.* Againe: [a] *The whole life of a good Christian, is an holy Will and desire. And that which thou desirest, thou seest not: but by desiring, art (as it were) inlarged and made capable, that when it shall come which thou shalt see, thou mayst be filled.* Basill saith, *Onely thou must will, and God will come of his owne accord.* [b] Bernard saith; *What, is not desire a voice? Yea a very strong voice. God heareth the desire of the poore; and a continuall desire, though wee speake nothing, is a voice continued*

[a] Exposit. Epist. Ioh. tract. 4. cap. 3.

Hom. of humilitie.

[b] Sup. cant. Ser. 48.

[a] Lu-

(a) Luther ſaith, *Chriſt is then truly Omnipotent, and then truly reignes in vs, When we are ſo weake, that wee can ſcarce giue any grone.* For *Paul* ſaith, that one ſuch groane is a ſtrong crie in the eares of God, filling both heauen and earth, * Againe, *Very few know, how weake and ſmall faith and hope is, vnder the croſſe, and in temptation. For it appeares, then to bee as ſmoaking flaxe, which a good blaſt of Winde would preſently put out: but ſuch as beleeue in theſe combates and terrours, againſt hope, vnder hope, that is, oppoſing themſelues by faith in the promiſe of Chriſt, againſt the feeling of ſinne, and the wrath of God, doe finde afterward that this little ſparke of faith (as it appeares to reaſon*

a Tom. 4. pag. 124.

* Ibid. fol. 156.

Which

which hardly perceiueth it) is peraduenture as the whole element of fire which filleth all heauen, and swalloweth vp all

Ib. fol. 300 *terrours and sinnes.* * Againe, *The more wee finde our vnworthinesse, and the lesse we finde the promise to belong vnto vs, the more must wee desire them, beeing assured that this desire doth greatly please God, who desireth and willeth that his grace should bee earnestly desired. This doth faith, which iudgeth it a precious thing, and therefore greatly hungreth and thirsteth after it, and so obtaines it. For God is delighted to fill the hungrie with good things, & to send the rich emptie away.* [a] Theodore Beza saith, *If thou finde not thine heart inwardly touched, pray that it may*

[a] Resp. ad Acta Colloq Mompel.

be

be touched: for thou then must know that this desire is a pledge of the fathers wil to thee. [a] Kemnitius saith: *When I haue a good desire, though it do scarcely shew it selfe in some little and slender sigh, I must be assured that the spirit of God is present: and worketh his good worke.* [b] Vrsinus saith, *Faith in the most holy men in this life, is imperfect and weake. Yet neuertheless, whosoeuer feeles in his heart an earnest desire, and a striuing against his naturall doubtings, both can and must assure himselfe that he is endued with true faith.* Againe, *Wicked men doe not desire the grace of the holy Spirit, whereby they may resist sinne. And therefore they are iustly depriued of it: for he that earnestly desireth the holy Ghost, hath*

[a] Locor. compor. 1.

[b] Catechis.

hath it already : becauſe this deſire of the ſpirit cannot be but from the ſpirit : as it is ſayde, Bleſſed are they that hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſſe, for they ſhall bee ſatisfied.* Bradford ſaid, Thy ſinnes are vndoubtedly pardoned, &c. for God hath giuen thee a penitent and beleeuing heart : that is, an heart which deſireth to repent and beleeue : for ſuch an one is taken of him (he accepting the will for the deede) for a penitent and beleeuing heart in deede. [a] Taffine ſaith, Our faith may be ſo ſmal and weake, as it doth not yet bring foorth fruites that may be liuely felt of vs, but if they which feele themſelues in ſuch eſtate, deſire to haue theſe feelings (namely of Gods fauour and loue (if they

* Epiſtle to Careleſſe.

[a] Booke of the markes of Gods children.

aske

aske them at Gods hands by prayer: this desire and praier are testimonies that the Spirit of God is in them, and that they haue faith already: for, is such a desire a fruit of the flesh or of the spirit? It is of the holy Spirit, who bringeth it forth only in such as hee dwels in, &c. Then these holy desires & praiers being the motions of the holy Ghost in vs, are testimonies of our faith, although they seeme to vs small and weake. As the woman that feeleth the mooving of a childe in her bodie, though very weake, assureth her selfe that she hath conceiued, and that she goeth with a liue childe: So, if we haue these motions, these holy affections and desires before mentioned, let vs not doubt, but that we haue the holy Ghost) who is

the

the authour of them) dwelling in vs, and consequently that wee haue also faith. Againe, hee saith: first, *If thou hast begunne to hate and flie sinne. 2. If thou feelest that thou art displeased at thy infirmities and corruptions: 3. If hauing offended God thou feelest a griefe, and a sorrow for it: 4. If thou desire to abstaine: 5. If thou auoidest the occasions: 6. If thou trauellest to doe thy endeauour: 7. If thou prayest to God to giue thee grace: All these holy affections proceeding from none other then from the Spirit of God ought to bee so many pledges and testimonies, that hee is in thee.*

[a] Psal. 6. [a] Master Knoxe saith, *Albeit your paines sometimes be so horrible, that you finde no release nor comfort, neyther in spi-*

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rit nor bodie, yet if thy heart can only sob vnto God, despaire not, you shall obtaine your hearts desire. And destitute you are not of faith: for at such a time as the flesh, naturall reason, the law of God, the present torment, the diuell at once doe crie, God is angry, and therefore, there is neither helpe nor remedie to bee hoped for at his hands: at such time I say, to sobbe to God, is the demonstration of the secret seede of God, which is hidden in Gods elect Children: and that only sobbe, is vnto God a more acceptable sacrifice, then without this crosse, to giue our bodies to be burnt, euen for the Truthes sake. More testimonies might be alleadged, but these shall suffice.

Against this point of Doctrine

ctrin, it may be alledged, that if desire to beleeue in our weakenesse be faith indeede; then some are iustified, and may be saued wanting a liuely apprehension and full perfection of Gods mercie in Christ. *Ans.* Iustifying faith in regard of his nature, is alwaies one and the same, and the essentiall property thereof, is, to apprehend Christ with his benefits, and to assure the verie conscience thereof. And therefore without some apprehension & assurance there can be no iustification or saluation in them that for age are able to beleeue. Yet there bee certaine degrees and measures of true faith. There is a strong faith, which causeth a full apprehension

henſion and perſwaſion of Gods mercie in Chriſt. This meaſure of faith the Lord vouchſafed *Abraham*, *Dauid*, *Paul*, the Prophets, Apoſtles, and Martyrs of God. It were a bleſſed thing if all beleeuers might attaine vnto this height of liuely faith, to ſay with *Paul*, I am perſwaded, that neither life, nor death, nor any thing elſe ſhall bee able to ſeparate vs from the loue of God in Chriſt: but all cannot, therefore there is another degree of faith, lower then the former, and yet true faith, called a little or weake faith, and it alſo hath a power to apprehend and apply the promiſe of ſaluation, but as yet by reaſon of weaknes, it is infolded (as it were)

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and wrapt vp in the heart, as the leafe and bloſſome in the bud. For ſuch perſons as haue this weake faith, can ſay indeed, that they beleeue their ſinnes to bee pardoned, and that ſeriouſly in their hearts they deſire to haue them pardoned: but as yet they cannot ſay, that they are without all doubt pardoned. And yet the mercy of God is not wanting vnto them. For in that they doe, and can deſire, and endeauour to apprehend, they doe indeede apprehend; God accepting the deſire to doe the thing for the thing done. This which I ſay will the better appeare, if the grounds thereof be conſidered. Faith doth not iuſtifie in reſpect of it ſelfe, becauſe it is an acti-

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on or vertue: or becauſe it is ſtrong, liuely, and perfect: but in reſpect of the obiect therof, namely Chriſt crucified, whom faith apprehendeth, as hee is ſet foorth vnto vs in the word and Sacraments. It is Chriſt that is the authour and matter of our Iuſtice, and it is he that applieth the ſame vnto vs: as for faith in vs, it is but an inſtrument to apprehend and receiue that which Chriſt for his part offereth and giueth. Therefore, if Faith erre not in his proper obiect, but follow the promiſe of God, though it doe but weakely apprehend, or at the leaſt cauſe a man onely to indeauour and deſire to apprehend, it is true faith and iuſtifieth. Though our apprehenſion

prehenſion bee neceſſary, yet our ſaluation ſtands rather in this, that God apprehends vs for his owne, then that wee apprehend him for ours. Phil. 3. verſ. 12. And rather in this, that wee are knowne of him, then that we know him. Gal. 4. 9.

Out of this concluſion ſprings an other not to be omitted, that God accepts the indeauour of the whole man to obey, for perfect obedience it ſelfe.

THat is, if men endeauour to pleaſe God in all things, God will not iudge their doings by the rigour of his law: but will accept their little and weake endeauor, to doe that which they can doe by his grace, as if they had perfectly fulfilled the law. But here

here remember, I put this Caueat; that this endeauour must be in and by the whole man, the very minde, conscience, will, and affections, doing that which they can in their kindes: and thus the endeauour to obey, which is a fruite of the spirit, shall bee distinguished from ciuil righteousnesse, which may be in Heathen men, and is onely in the outward, and not in the inward man. The truth of the conclusion appeares by that which the Prophet *Malachie* saith, that God wil spare them that feare him, as a Father spares his child: who accepts the thing done, as well done, if the childe shew his good will to please his Father, and to doe what he can. Mal. 3. 17.

IIII.

IIII. Concluſion.

To ſee and feele in our ſelues the want of any grace pertaining to Saluation, & to be grieued therefore: is the grace it ſelfe.

The Expoſition.

VNderſtand this concluſion as the former, namely that griefe of the hart for the want of any grace neceſſarie to ſaluation, is as much with God as the grace it ſelfe.

When being in diſtreſſe, we cannot pray as wee ought; God accepts the very groans, ſobbes, and ſighes of the perplexed heart, as the prayer it ſelfe, Rom. 8. 29. When wee are grieued becauſe we cannot be grieued for our ſinnes, it is a degree and meaſure of godly

ly sorrow before God. Augustine saith well: *Sometimes our prayer is luke-warme, or rather cold and almost no prayer: nay sometime it is altogether no prayer at all, and yet Wee can with griefe perceiue this in our selues: for if Wee can but grieue because wee cannot pray, we now pray indeede.* Hierome saith, *Then Wee are iust When We doe acknowledge our selues to be sinners:* Againe, *This is the true wisedome of man, to know himselfe to be imperfect. And (that I may so speake) the perfection of all iust men in the flesh is imperfect:* Augustine againe saith, *That the vertue which is now in a iust man: is thus farre forth perfect, that vnto the perfection thereof, there belongs a true acknowledgement, and an humble*

Com. 4. l. 1 ad Simplic. in fine.

Lib. 1. contra Pelagianos.

ble confeſſion of the imperfection thereof. A broken and contrite heart after an offence, is as much with GOD, as if there had beene no offence at all. And therefore ſo ſoone as *Dauid* after his grieuous fall, in heauineſſe of heart, confeſſed his ſinne, ſaying in effect but thus much, *I haue ſinned*, the Lord pronounceth the pardon of his ſinne in heauen, and that preſently.

V. Concluſion.

He that hath begunne to ſubiect himſelfe to Chriſt and his word, though as yet hee be ignorant in moſt points of religion, yet if he haue care to increaſe in knowledge, and to pra-

practise that which he knoweth hee is accepted of God, as a true beleeuer.

The Exposition.

SVndrie persons by the Euangelists, are said to beleeue, which had onely seene the miracles of Christ, and as yet had made no further proceedings but to acknowledge Christ to be the Messias, and to submit themselues to him and his doctrine, which afterward should bee taught. On this manner, the woman of Samaria beleeued, and many of the Samaritans vpon her report: and a certain ruler, by reason of a miracle wrought vpon his sonne, is said to beleeue, and all his housholde. Ioh. 4. 42. 52. When our Sa-

uiour Christ commended the faith of the Apostles, terming it a rocke, against which the gates of hell should not preuaile, it was not the plentifull knowledge of the doctrine of saluation: for they were ignorant of many articles of faith, as namely, of the death, resurrection, ascension, and kingdome of Christ: but because they beleeued him to bee the sonne of God, and the Sauiour of mankinde, and they had withall resolued themselues to cleaue vnto him, and the blessed doctrine of saluation, which hee taught, though as yet they were ignorāt in many points. The holy Ghost commended the faith of *Rahab*, when shee receiued the spies: Now this her faith was

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indeed but a ſeede and beginning of liuely faith: for then ſhee had onely heard of the miracles done in Egypt, and of the deliuerance of the Iſraelites, and was thereupon ſmitten with feare, and had conceiued a reſolution with her ſelfe, to ioyne her ſelfe to the Iſraelites, and to worſhip the true God. Now theſe and the like, are tearmed beleeuers, vpon iuſt cauſe: for though they bee ignorant as yet, yet their ignorance ſhall bee no continuing or laſting ignorance: and they haue excellent ſeedes of grace, namely, a purpoſe of hart to cleaue to Chriſt, and a care to profit in the doctrine of ſaluation, whereof they haue ſome little knowledge.

VI. Concluſion.

The foreſaide beginnings of grace are counterfeit, vnleſſe they increaſe.

The Expoſition.

THe wickedneſſe of mans nature, and the depth of hypocriſie is ſuch, that a man may & can eaſily transforme himſelfe into the counterfeit and reſemblance of any grace of GOD. Therefore I put downe in this laſt concluſion a certaine note, whereby the gifts of God may bee diſcerned, namely, that they grow vp and increaſe, as the graine of Muſterd-ſeede, to a great tree, and beare fruit anſwerably. The grace in the heart is like

like the graine of Musterd-seede in two things. First, it is small to see to, at the beginning: Secondly, after it is cast into the ground of the heart, it increaseth speedily, and spreades it selfe. Therefore, if a man at the first haue but some little feeling of his wants, some weake and faint desire, some small obedience, he must not let this sparke of grace go out, but these motions of the spirit must bee increased by the vse of the word, Sacraments, & prayer: and they must daily be stirred vp by meditating, endeauouring, striuing, asking, seeking, knocking. The Master deliuering his Talents to his seruants, saith vnto them; Occupie till I come, and not

hide in the earth, Matth. 25. 16. *Paul* vſeth an excellent ſpeech to *Timothie*: I exhort thee to ſtirre vp the gift of God which is in thee: namely, as fire is ſtirred vp by oftē blowing, and putting to of wood: 2. Timoth. 1. 6. As for ſuch motions of the heart that laſt for a weeke, or a moneth, and after vaniſh away, they are not to be regarded: and the Lord by the Prophet *Oſea* complaineth of them, ſaying, *O Ephraim, thy righteouſnes is like the morning dew.* Chap. 6.

Therfore conſidering, that grace, vnleſſe it be confirmed and exerciſed, is indeede no grace; I will heere adde certaine rules of direction, that wee may the more eaſily put

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in practiſe the ſpirituall exerciſe of inuocation, faith, and repentance: and thereby alſo quicken and reuiue the ſeedes and beginnings of grace.

1 In what place ſo euer thou art, whether alone or abroad, by day or by night, and whatſoeuer thou art doing, ſet thy ſelfe in the preſence of God, let this perſwaſion alwaies take place in thy heart, that thou art before the liuing God: and do thy endeuor, that this perſwaſion may ſmite thy heart with awe and reuerence, and make thee afraide to ſinne. This counſell the Lord gaue *Abrahã*. Gen. 17. 1 *Walk before me, and be vpright.* This things alſo was practiſed by *Enoch*, who for this cauſe is ſaid *to Walk With God*,

2 Esteeme of euery present day, as of the day of thy death; and therefore liue as though thou were dying, and doe those good duties euery day that thou wouldest doe, if thou were dying. This is Christian watchfulnesse, and remember it.

3. Make Catalogues and billes of thine owne sinnes, especially of those sinnes that haue most dishonored God, and wounded thine own conscience: set them before thee often, especially then, when thou hast any particular occasion of renewing thy repentance, that thy heart by this dolefull sight may bee further humbled. This was *Dauids* practise, when hee considered his waies, and

turned

turned his feet to Gods commandements. Psal. 119. 57. And when hee confessed the sinnes of his youth. Psal. 25. This was *Iobs* practise, when he said he was not able to answer one of a thousand of his sinnes vnto God. Iob 9. 1.

4 When thou first openest thine eyes in a morning, pray to God, and giue him thankes heartily: God then shall haue his honor: and thy heart shall be the better for it the whole day following.

For wee see in experience, that vessels keepe long the taste of that liquor wherwith they are first seasoned. And whe thou lyest down, let that be the last also: for thou knowest not, whether thou beeing fallen asleepe, shalt euer rise

againe

againe aliue. Good therefore it is, that thou ſhouldeſt giue vp thy ſelfe into the hands of God whilſt thou art waking.

5 Labour to ſee and feele thy ſpirituall pouerty, that is, to ſee the want of grace in thy ſelfe, eſpecially thoſe inward corruptions, of vnbeleefe, pride, ſelfe-loue, &c. Labour to be diſpleaſed with thy ſelf: and labour to feele, that by reaſon of them thou ſtandeſt in neede of euery drop of the blood of Chriſt to heale and clenſe thee from theſe wants: and let this practiſe take ſuch place with thee, that if thou bee demanded what in thine eſtimation is the vileſt of the creatures vpon earth? thine heart and conſcience may anſwer with a loud voyce, *I*,

euen

euen I, by reaſon of mine owne ſinnes: and againe, if thou bee demaunded what is the beſt thing in the world for thee, thy heart and conſcience may anſwer againe with a ſtrong and loud cry, *One droppe of the blood of Chriſt to waſh away my ſinnes.*

6 Shew thy ſelfe to bee a member of Chriſt, and a ſeruant of God, not onely in the generall calling of a Chriſtian, but alſo in the particular calling, in which thou art placed. It is nothing for a magiſtrate to be a Chriſtian man, but he muſt alſo bee a Chriſtian magiſtrate: it is not enough for a maſter of a family to be a Chriſtian man or a Chriſtiã in the Church, but he muſt alſo be a Chriſtian in his family

and

& in the trade which hee followeth daily. Not euery one that is a common hearer of the word, and a frequenter of the Lords table, is therefore a good Christian, vnlesse his conuersation in his priuate house, and in his priuate affaires and dealings besutable; There, is a man to bee seene what he is.

7 Search the Scriptures, to see what is sinne, and what is not sinne, in euery action: this done, carry in thy heart a constant and resolute purpose, not to sin in any thing: for Faith and the purpose of sinning can neuer stand together.

8 Let thine endeauour be sutable to thy purpose: and therefore doe nothing at any

time

time against thy conscience, rightly enformed by the word: exercise thy selfe to eschew euery sinne, and to obey God in euery one of his commandements, that pertaine either to the generall calling of a Christian, or thy particular calling. Thus did good *Iosias*, who turned vnto God with all his heart, according to *all* the lawe of *Moses*, 1. King. 23. 25 and thus did *Zachary* and *Elizabeth*, that walked *in all* the commaundements of God without reproofe. *Luk.* 1.6.

9 If at any time against thy purpose and resolution, thou bee ouertaken with any sinne little or great, lye not in it, but speedily recouer thy selfe by repentance: humble

thy

thy ſelfe, confeſsing thine offence, and by prayer intreate the Lord to pardon the ſame, and that earneſtly, till ſuch time as thou findeſt thy conſcience truely pacified, & thy care to eſchue the ſame ſinne increaſed.

10 Conſider often of the right and proper end of thy life in this world, which is not to ſeeke profite, honour, pleaſure, but that in ſeruing of men, wee might ſerue God in our callings. God could, if it ſo pleaſed him, preſerue man without the miniſtry of man, but his pleaſure is to fulfil his worke and will in the preſeruation of our bodies, and ſaluation of our ſoules, by the imploiment of men in his ſeruice, euery one according to his

his vocation. Neither is there ſo much as a bond-ſlaue, but he muſt in and by his faithfull ſeruice to his Maſter, ſerue the Lord. Men therefore doe commonly profane their labours and liues, by ayming at a wrong end, when all their care conſiſteth onely in getting ſufficient maintenance for them and theirs, for the obtaining of credite, riches, and carnall commodities. For thus men ſerue themſelues, and not God, or men: much leſſe doe they ſerue God in ſeruing of men.

11 Giue all diligence to make thy election ſure, and to gather manifold tokens thereof. For this cauſe obſerue the workes of Gods prouidence, loue, and mercy, both

both in thee and vpon thee, from time to time: for the ferious conſideration of them, and the laying of them together, when they are many and ſeuerall, miniſter much direction, aſſurance of Gods fauour and comfort. This was the practiſe of Dauid, 1. Sam. 17.34. Pſal. 25. all.

12 Thinke euermore thy preſent eſtate whatſoeuer it bee, to be the beſt eſtate for thee: becauſe whatſoeuer befalles thee, though it be ſickenes, or any other affliction, or death, befals thee of the good prouidence of God. That this may the better bee done, labour to ſee & acknowledge the prouidence of God, as well in pouertie as in abundance; as well in diſgrace as in

good

good report, as well in ſickeneſſe as in health, as well in life as in death.

13 Pray continually; I meane, not by ſolemne and ſet prayer, but by ſecret and inward elaculations of the heart, that is, by a continuall eleuation of thy minde vnto Chriſt, ſitting at the right hand of God the Father, and that either by praier orgiuing of thankes ſo often as any occaſion ſhall be offered.

14 Thinke often of the worſt and moſt grieuous things that may befall thee, either in this life or death for the name of Chriſt: make a reckoning of them, and prepare thy ſelfe to beare them: that when they come, they may not ſeeme ſtrange, but be borne

borne the more easily.

15 Make conscience of idle, vaine, vnhonest, and vngodly thoughts: for these are the seedes and beginnings of actuall sin in word and in deede. This want of care in ordering and composing of our thoughts, is often punished with a fearefull temptation in the very thought, called of Diuines, *Tentatio blasphemiarum*, a tentation of blasphemies.

16 When any good motion or affection riseth in the heart, suffer it not to passe away, but feede it by reading, meditating, praying.

17 Whatsoeuer good thing thou goest about, whether it be in word or deede, doe it not in conceit of thy selfe,

or

or in the pride of thy heart, but in humility aſcribing the power whereby thou doeſt thy worke, and the 'prayſe thereof to God: otherwiſe thou ſhalt finde by experience God will curſe thy beſt doings.

18 Deſpiſe not ciuill honeſty: good conſcience and good manners muſt go together: therefore remember to make conſcience of lying, and of cuſtomable ſwearing, in common talke: contend not eyther in deede or word with any man, bee curteous and gentle to all, good and bad: beare with mens wants and frailties, as haſtineſſe, frowardneſſe, ſelfe-liking, curiouſneſſe, &c. paſsing by them as beeing not perceiued:

ued: returne not euill for euil, but rather good for euill: vse meate, drinke, and apparell, in that manner & measure, that they may further godlinesse; and may be as it were signes, in which thou mayest expresse the hidden grace of thy heart: Striue not to goe beyond any, vnlesse it bee in good things: go before thine equals in giuing of honour, rather then in taking of it: make conscience of thy word, and let it bee as a bond: professe no more outwardly then thou hast inwardly in heart: oppresse or defraude no man in bargaining: in all companies, eyther doe good, or take good.

19 Cleaue not by inordinate affection to any creature,

ture, but aboue all things quiet & rest thy minde in Christ, aboue all dignitie & honour, aboue all cunning and policy, aboue all glory and honour, aboue all health and beautie, aboue all wealth and treasure, aboue all ioy & delight, aboue all fame and praise, aboue all mirth and consolation, that mans heart can feele or deuise beside Christ.

With these rules of practise, ioyne rules of meditation; whereby I propound sixe vnto thee, as I finde them set downe by a learned Diuine called *Victorinus Strigelius*.

I.

Wee must not fall away from God for any creature.

II.

Infinite eternity is farre to be

be preferred before the ſhort race of this mortall life.

III.

We muſt hold faſt the promiſe of grace, though we loſe all temporall bleſsings; and they alſo in death muſt needs be left.

IIII.

Let the loue of God in Chriſt, and the loue of the Church for Chriſt, be ſtrong in thee, and preuaile againſt all other affections.

V.

It is the principall part of a Chriſtian, to beleeue things inuiſible, to hope for things deferred, to loue God when he ſhews him to be an enemy, and thus to perſeuere vnto the end.

VI.

VI.

It is a most effectuall remedy for any griefe, to quiet our selues in a confidence of the presence and helpe of God: and to aske him, and withall to waite, either for some easement or deliuerance.

VII.

All the workes of God are done in contrarie meanes.

FINIS.